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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [BG](#)
SUBJECT: UN OFFICE OF DRUGS AND CRIME PROGRAM OFFICER ON
BANGLADESH'S ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i., Geeta Pasi, reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) On July 12, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime Program Officer Oliver Stolpe, in Dhaka attending the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), told poloff about his discussions with Bangladeshis. He said that he talked to Chief of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Hasan Mashud Chowdhury and Deputy Director of the Bangladesh Bank Kasim. Stolpe said that common themes expressed by the Bangladeshis included the need to increase their capacity to deal with corruption, improve the criminal justice system, and improve their ability to prosecute crimes related to corruption.

¶2. (C) Stolpe said that Bangladesh's initiative to free the lower courts from executive control is an opportune time to introduce ethics training to judges. UNODC has experience with supporting judiciary with programs in ethics training. He said that the Chair of the ACC admitted that he was overwhelmed with donor offers of assistance, and in his view, the ACC should focus on cases. Stolpe said that the ACC should conduct a "Gap Analysis" of what their capabilities are compared to the UN Convention on Corruption to identify programmatic shortfalls.

¶3. (C) Stolpe said the ACC needs to focus on a corruption baseline assessment focusing on sectors. He said that this is being done in some fashion: the World Bank is doing roads, UK's Department For International Development (DFID) is doing Health and Education, and UNODC will do business community and the justice sector. "We have provided the ACC with a survey instrument, which provides baselines to measure programs. Currently, the ACC is using the Transparency International index but it's a slow broad and rough measure better suited to comparing countries but not good for program analysis," said Stolpe.

¶4. (C) Stolpe opined that most government anti-corruption measures failed to work because they are simply not supported by the government. He said that this is what happened to the Anti-Corruption Commission effort. He added that this hampers the current ACC, which inherited the old ACC staff and the "wrong people." He said that he understood the current ACC is spending much of its investigative effort on conducting background checks on the inherited staff. "Only now are they starting to clean house," he said.

¶5. (C) Overall, Stolpe said, it is "remarkable" that the ACC has been able to complete so many corruption cases. Stolpe said that adding "illicit enrichment" as a crime, which

shifted the burden of proof, helped in this effort. However, in jurisdictions where the crime of "illicit enrichment" does not exist, judges will not permit asset recovery. Bangladesh will not have problems with asset recovery in places like Hong Kong, but could in other jurisdictions. Stolpe advised that Bangladesh seek to convict people on other offenses in addition to illicit enrichment.

16. (C) Comment: The GOB's state of emergency and related anti-corruption campaign created the political will for quick ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which opened the door to international anti-corruption technical assistance. Surprisingly, the GOB is taking advantage of offered assistance but is hindered by a limited capacity to absorb and use it. Stolpe's candid assessment of GOB's efforts and progress in face of legacy obstacles is a reality check which will be a useful gauge of progress in the coming months.
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